



**Let the Children Come - When Guilt Gets in the Way
Sermon Discussion Questions - May 30, 2021**

Scripture Passages:

Luke 18:9-14 (NIV84) To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ (14) I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Mark 5:3-20 (NIV84) This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won’t torture me!” For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you evil spirit!” Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “My name is Legion (5000),” he replied, “for we are many.” ... (11) A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, “Send us among the pigs... He gave them permission, and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd... rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they saw the man

who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ... (18) As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." The man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis (ten cities) how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

John 1:4-5 (NIV84) In [Jesus] was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

1 John 4:9-10 (NLT) God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT) For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Warm Up:

Pastor Tom told the story about Lisa getting sprayed by the skunk and the smell lingering everywhere and on everything! What are some of the worst things you have every smelled? If there is a story, share it with your group.

Discussion:

In the beginning of his message, Pastor Tom describes guilt and shame as hanging around and permeating everything.

How have you seen shame and guilt lingering around? What kinds of situations might bring out shame or guilt for people? How do you see guilt and shame playing out in culture?

In reference to the Pharisee in Luke 18, Pastor Tom said *comparison is the root of self-righteousness*.

What things do you compare to others in your own life? How might comparison/self-righteousness and guilt/shame be connected?

Read Luke 18:14-15.

What stands out most to you? If you could, what might you ask Jesus about his response to this moment? How do guilt and self-righteousness show up in this passage?

In reference to the previous question, how does Jesus' response effect your understanding of self-righteousness verses humility? What are some ways this contrasts our current culture?

Excerpt from Pastor Tom:

I am not saying God is uninterested in us being good people. I am saying God is not interested in good being entered as evidence for our innocence.

Why might this distinction be important? What are some ways that we might try to use our good behaviors “as evidence for our innocence”? What might be some ways to counteract the draw to justify ourselves with good behaviors?

Read Mark 5:18-19.

What stands out about the response of the formerly demon-possessed man? How might the situation have gone differently if he leaned into his guilt and shame rather than God’s mercy? What does this passage tell us to do after we receive God’s mercy?

Pastor Tom said, “*Nothing can be uncovered about you or me that cannot be covered by the grace of Jesus.*”

How could leaning into this truth change the power of the guilt and shame in your life? How might leaning into this truth effect the way you relate and speak to others?

Next Steps:

Excerpt from Pastor Tom:

Where are you in the moment? Guilty? Jesus can set you free and break your chains. There is no chain stronger than God’s forgiveness. Shame? Nobody is destined to be defined by their past. If that is what your community is doing to you, find another community. Nothing can be uncovered about you or me that cannot be covered by the grace of Jesus.

Take some time this week to evaluate where you are. What are some practical steps you need to take to step away from the guilt and shame hanging around in your life?

Mark 5:19 - Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.”

How can you be a part of ushering in God’s mercy in your family, community, job, etc.?